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## How the War Came to America ---A Bit of Diplomatic History

By the Committee of Public Information

Even at this late day there are some Americans who have lost sight of the important facts which lead up to the declaration of a state of war between the United States and the Imperial German Government. To refresh the memory of Americans and to refute the slanders of those whose heart is with the German cause this series of articles by the committee on Public Information is being presented. The next issue will carry the history of German transgressions of the laws of nations further.

There has been in our diplomacy one more outstanding aspiration. We have constantly sought to substitute judicial for military settlements of disputes between nations.

The genesis of this idea dates from the discussions over the Federal organization of our 13 original states, which were almost as jealous of their sovereignties as are the nations of Europe today. The first great step toward the League of Honor, which we hope will at last bring peace to the world, was taken when our 13 States agreed to disarm and submit all their disputes to the high tribunal of the new federation.

And this idea of an inter state court, which except at the time of our Civil War has given this Nation internal peace, has profoundly influenced our foreign policy. Of our efforts to bring others to our way of thinking, an historical resume was presented by our delegates at the First Hague Conference. A project was submitted there for the foundation of a world court. And a few years later Mr. Root, our secretary of State, in instructing our delegates to the Second Conference at The Hague, laid especial emphasis on this same ideal.

We have taken a particular pride in being in the vanguard of this movement for the peaceable settlement by progress of law of all disputes between nations. And these efforts have not been without success. For although the past few decades have seen this principal time and again put under a terrific strain, no nation has dared to go to war against the award of a court of arbitration. The stupendous possibilities that lie in arbitration for solving international problems, promoting liberal principles, and safeguarding human life had been amply demonstrated before the present war began.

But in the discussion at The Hague largely through the resistance of the German Empire and its satellites, the efforts of our delegates and those of other governments to bring about a general treaty of compulsory arbitration had failed. And therefore this

nation, having been thwarted in its attempts to secure a general agreement, begun negotiations with all those nations which like our own preferred the methods of law and peace, with the purpose of effecting dual arbitration treaties. And before the end of 1914 we had signed far-reaching treaties with 30 nations, 29 of which had been duly ratified and proclaimed. But in this work, too, we were made to feel the same opposition as at the Hague. For while Great Britain, France, Russia, and Italy cordially welcomed our overtures, the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires were noticeably absent from the list of those nations who desired by specific agreements in advance to minimize the danger of war.

On the eve of the present conflict, our position toward other nations might have summarized under three heads:

I. **The Monroe Doctrine.**—We had pledged ourselves to defend the New World from European aggression, and we had by word and deed made it clear that we would not interfere in any European dispute.

II. **The Freedom of the seas.**—every naval conference our influence had been given in support of the principal that sea law to be just and worthy of general respect must be based on the consent of the governed.

III. **Arbitration.**—As we had secured peace at home by referring interstate disputes to a federal tribunal, we urged a similar settlement of international controversies. Our ideal was a permanent world court. We have already signed arbitration treaties not only with great powers which might conceivably attack us, but even more freely with weaker neighbors in order to show our good faith in recognizing the equality of the nations both great and small. We had made plain to the nations our purpose to forestall by every means in our power the recurrence of wars in the world.

(Continued Next Week)



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